

REMARKS**A. Status of the Claims and Explanation of Amendments**

Prior to the submission of this paper, claims 1-11 were pending. Claims 1 and 3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) for allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,906,078 to Inbata ("Inabata") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,377,399 to Yanari ("Yanari"). Claims 1, 4, and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,617,159 to Sakagami ("Sakagami") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,377,305 to Onuki ("Onuki"). Claims 1 and 6-9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 2,985,071 to Becker, in view of Yanari and Inabata.

The Examiner had also objected to claims 2, 5, and 10 for being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but indicated that these claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

In this paper, Applicant has cancelled claims 1-9 and 11 without prejudice, thereby rendering the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) moot. Moreover, claim 10 has been rewritten in independent form, as suggested by the Examiner.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that this case is in condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

In the event that the Examiner decides that a telephone conference would be useful for furthering the prosecution of this case, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned at the number provided.

AUTHORIZATION

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required for consideration of this Amendment to Deposit Account No. 13-4500, Order No. 1232-4834. A DUPLICATE OF THIS DOCUMENT IS ATTACHED.

In the event that an extension of time is required, or which may be required in addition to that requested in a petition for an extension of time, the Commissioner is requested to grant a petition for that extension of time which is required to make this response timely and is hereby authorized to charge any fee for such an extension of time or credit any overpayment for an extension of time to Deposit Account No. 13-4500, Order No. 1232-4834. A DUPLICATE OF THIS DOCUMENT IS ATTACHED.

Respectfully submitted,
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Dated: June 3, 2004

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